

The Results Of a Blunder

By EDWARD STEWART

"It's too bad."
"I am dreadfully sorry, my dear young lady. It could not be helped."
"I have been counting on this story to give me a literary reputation. You have ruined all these hopes."
This was ridiculous. The story was below the average.
The truth is that Hawkins, the editor and proprietor of the magazine, had no business to go away and leave me a scatter-brained young man, in full control. I had hosts of friends, and my mind was absorbed with youthful pleasures. As to my work at the editorial rooms, Hawkins had arranged everything before my departure, so that there was nothing to do but take the copy for the next issue out of his desk, and send it to the composing room. Among other things I sent up a story called "What's It All About?" by Mildred Eaton. I was looking my desk one Friday afternoon preparatory to going into the country till the following Tuesday when a message came down from the composing room that the story "What's It All About?" was incomplete. I called for the copy and found the last two chapters missing.
Here was a pretty kettle of fish. I ransacked the office without success, sent for the author and was informed that she had gone on a trip, no one knew where. What was I to do? Give up my outing to search for a needle in a haystack? Not I. My resolution was taken. It was then 2 o'clock. By 4 I could skim the manuscript, by 6 I could write the last chapters and be ready for the 7 o'clock train instead of the 8 o'clock, as I had intended.
Had I taken more time and put my mind on my work instead of dwelling on the outing I was to have, afraid all the while that I would miss the train—the last till the next morning—I might have done fairly well. As it was, I made a frightful mess of the job, and brought the story to a close by putting in my mouth a high-toned, virtuous, sanctimonious. The heroine I made to take a back seat, but fortunately on the same bench with the hero I finished the work at half past 6 gave it to a composing room messenger who was waiting for it and made it dash for the train.
Well, the story came out, and with it came the author, a pretty girl of twenty, who sought me in my office with tears in her eyes. Had she returned I could have stood up against her manfully. As it was, I could only pretend to weep, not at the position my blunder had put me in but that I should have ruined her hopes of literary fame. I told her that I seriously meditated drawing myself. She made the threat with my head buried in my arms, both head and arms resting on my desk, my whole body shaking convulsively, she feared I would carry it out. When she raised my face with her own soft hands and I looked into her tear-dimmed but forgiving eyes, I was filled with shame.
"My dear Miss Eaton," I sobbed, "I hope that some of this misfortune may come as a reparation for you, which taken at the end will lead to fortune. I am one of those fellows whose lives are a chain of lucky and unlucky incidents. I am constantly meeting with misfortune—my own fault, I dare say—but I always come out ahead in the game. Write a new story, and I will use all my influence with Mr. Hawkins to have it published as a 'special feature.' Now tell me that you forgive me."
She put out her hand, smiling through her tears, and went away.
When the first batch of criticisms for the number of the magazine came in I braced myself to bear the references to the story I had ruined as one about to be executed, nerves himself for the ordeal. With the first I caught a faint gleam of hope. Here it is:
"The story by Miss Eaton, 'What's It All About?' is, judging from its name, what it is doubtless intended to be—a puzzle. What principles are covered under the strange ending probably only students of the introspective school will be able to explain satisfactorily. In this respect the story will excite great interest."
The next was evidently a criticism by some critic who was possibly hurrying, as I had done to the country and had only skimmed the early part of the story, for he pronounced the ending "just what might be expected in this inferior class of work." The third spoke of the pleasant style in which "What's It All About?" was written, an easy way of criticising a story the critic is too busy to read. Seven critics gave hypothetical explanations of the mystery attending the closing chapters. In the whole batch of criticisms there was not one which indicated that the story had been slaughtered by a graceless scamp in a hurry to get away on a pleasure trip.
In view of the attention these critics called to the story the author found no difficulty in securing a publisher for it in book form. It was considered too deep to have a large sale except among critical, analytical, philological and skeptical people, but it made a name for the author, and she has made a fortune.
I suppose I should have had the modesty to consider myself well out of a bad scrape and acknowledge my fault to Hawkins. I did, to Miss Eaton I did not. I threw out a hint that the story as she had written it was doomed to failure. I had concocted a scheme to make it a success and make her famous. Her gratitude gave me not only her for a wife, but the management of her fortune.

WEDDING RINGS.

Their Descent From the Ancient Signet Rings of Egypt.

It was under the shadow of the pyramids that brides first wore rings as symbols of wedlock.
In the early Egyptian home it was the custom of the wife to keep all of her jars, closets and storerooms sealed. A different seal ordinarily was used for every door or jars containing certain foods. Preserved sweets, for instance, would be sealed with one kind, and some sharp appetizer with another. So the course of time brought the Egyptian woman a goodly number of seals, the special mark of her wifehood.
Then it became a custom for the bride, on her wedding day, to present the future husband with a little string of seals. In the beginning they usually were suspended from an ornamental chain about her neck, but afterward it became the custom to carry the keys on an ornamental cord around the wrist. And finally the keys were attached to a woman's finger by means of a cord or gold wire. This naturally meant restriction to the number of seals, and some genius of the days of old hit upon the idea of combining the seal and the wire together. Such a ring was regularly presented to the bride on her wedding day.
Things had reached this state of progress when keys seem to have been first used in Egypt to any great extent. The coming of locks did away with the wily seals and her peculiar mark of sovereignty in the home. By degrees the signet ring went out of fashion as the special prerogative of the bride and was succeeded by a plain band ring such as every young lady of today expects to wear. Numbers of these plain and signet rings have been found in the old tombs of northern Africa, mute evidence of loves long since dead and gone.

HARD WORK FOR CUPIID.

Roumanian Farmers Try to Keep Their Sons From Wedlock.

The Roumanian farmer doesn't think much of matrimony. A bachelor hasn't missed much, in his opinion. And when his son gets the marrying bug buzzing in his bosom the Roumanian dad is apt to take a hickory club and beat it out of the young man's system. That's why the Roumanian youth when he is in love never confides the happy secret to his father. He goes and tells his mother, for women still believe in love and marriage, although they lead from the altar to the wash tub. But the father has faced the music and the plow handles so long in his hard struggle to feed the hungry mouths opened to him by marriage that he has forgotten he was once a lover sighing lover's tales. He is about as much in favor of state wide matrimony as a sick boy is in favor of castor oil.
So the son tells his mother. The mother feeds father the best dinner she can cook, and when the old man is in a yellow mood she breaks the bad news about their boy. If she is skillful enough she wins his grudging consent, and he calls in his two best men. These two go with his son to the girl's home. Perhaps she has heard nothing of the love affair, but when she sees them coming she guesses what's up. Her father enters into the visitors, and if he lets the fire go out it means he has taken this method to turn them down cold.
Roumanian wives all have silk dresses or silk shawls. Their husbands do not buy the silk for them, the women raise it themselves.—Exchange

Teeth Gritting a Symptom.

When children grit their teeth, either asleep or as a habit when awake, it is generally a sign that they have adenoid growths back of their noses and need the attention of a physician. Dr. C. E. Benjamin tells in a journal of Amsterdam of his experience with 1,544 cases of adenoids, in which about 37 per cent of the children were teeth gritters, and in most of the cases the gritting ceased when the adenoids were removed. Among 115 teeth gritters he examined for troubles other than adenoids all but two were found to have adenoids.

Art in America.

The first school of painting to establish itself on American soil was that of Spain, following in the train of vice-roys and prelates after the Indian colonies had been subjected and Spanish towns had been built. To the present day there exists in the City of Mexico the oldest academy of the fine arts in the western world, the Academy of San Carlos. It is nearly as old as the Royal Academy, London.

Fogs Are Valuable.

It has been discovered that fogs, especially ocean fogs, are valuable. Fogs are the principal fertilizers of the great bean fields of California. The fields are dry farmed. Rain means ruin. Yet moisture is a necessity. This is furnished in just the right degree by fogs.—Detroit Free Press.

He Told Her.

It was the first ball game she had ever attended.
"Why do they call that thing the plate?" was her forty-seventh question.
"Why—er—because that's where the drops from the pitcher are caught," he replied, his reason crackling under the strain.—Boston Transcript.

This Life.

There is only one way to get ready for immortality, and that is to love this life and live it as bravely and cheerfully and faithfully as we can.—Van Dyke.

TRICKING THE CREDULOUS.

Lures of Gold Brick Schemes For the Small Investors.

Will persons with money never learn how to take care of it? Will they never guard themselves against the horde of tricksters who make a business of taking advantage of the credulous and especially of credulous women?
Bear in mind that no one will make money for you when he can make it for himself. If he offers to give you the key to wealth, suspect him, for such keys are kept by their possessors and are not given away to strangers.
The postoffice a year or two ago showed that over \$100,000,000 had been lost by persons who listened to the gold brick schemes, but the game still goes on despite the vigilance of the postoffice department and the passage of protective measures, known as "blue sky laws," by many states.
Will the people never learn to discount the alluring literature which these shysters send out and which is written for them by some of the sharpest and brightest writers of our day, whose services can be easily obtained for a few dollars?
I advise my readers who receive these tempting propositions to send them at once to the postmaster general at Washington for investigation. That is the business of the postoffice department, and it will be only too happy to take up such matters.
Small investors are particularly the victims of these bunko schemes, for the false notion prevails that a man or woman with a small amount of money cannot buy high class investments. This is erroneous. An investment can now be made in the best of paying securities with as small an amount as \$10 through the partial payment plan, which is readily understood, though the term may sound formidable.—Leslie's Weekly.

A LITTLE PIECE OF LEAD.

The Costliest Thing This World of Ours Has Ever Known.

Just think of one small piece of lead, probably weighing less than an ounce that cost the world some \$100,000,000,000 in money, probably \$100,000,000,000 in property, more than 1,000,000,000 lives and individual suffering and loss impossible of computation—a bit of lead that embroiled in war Germany, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Belgium, the United States, Turkey, Siberia, Italy, Montenegro, Roumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Egypt, Canada, Australia, China, Japan, South Africa, India and Russia and brought every nation to the brink of internal trouble or outward disaster the consequences of which are being felt by every human being, civilized or uncivilized, white, black, yellow or brown.
That small piece of lead was fired from a pistol in the hands of a crack-brained youth of Serbian nationality into the body of the heir to the Austrian throne. The trouble arising from this mad act and its punishment set fire to the powder trains in Europe and led to hostile acts in the East and finally and suddenly to open war in 1914.
That little piece of lead should be preserved as a memorial to all future generations and as the costliest thing the world has ever seen. It would teach restraint for the weak minded and violent; it would teach the importance of minor acts and things; it would teach peace as a costly monument, no book of hours, no painting of tragedy could ever teach it.—Detroit Free Press.

Ox Bones.

Ox bones have a considerable value. The four feet of an ordinary ox will make a pint of neat's foot oil. The thigh bone is the most valuable, being useful for cutting into toothbrush handles. The fore leg bones are made into collar buttons and parasol handles. The water in which the bones are boiled is reduced to glue, while the dust which comes from sawing the bones is turned into food for cattle and poultry.—Exchange

Fine Canal Locks.

Some of the locks in the New York barge canal are the finest in the world, the five at Waterford being the greatest series of high lift locks in existence. They have a combined lift of 103 feet, one foot less than the total lift of every lock in the Panama canal. The upper gates weigh forty tons and the lower about 100 tons.

Dislocation of the Hip Joint.

In demonstrating his now famous method of repairing in its socket a hip that has been dislocated since birth, Dr. John Killen of the Presbyterian hospital, Chicago, said most of these cases were girls and in most of them it was the left hip. He could not offer any suggestion as to why this should be so.

Duets Popular.

Patience—What kind of singing do you prefer, solos or duets?
Patience—Oh, duets, by all means.
"Well, come over to the house some time and I'll start (the phonograph and the parrot going at the same time).—Yonkers Statesman

Natural Tendency.

"Pop, do all trades have their own diseases?"
"So they say son."
"Then is it only carpenters that have shingles?"—Baltimore American.

Gossip.

"Mrs. Gasley is a great gossip."
"Yes. She has a good sense of humor."—Puck.

A NARROW ESCAPE

By ALAN HINSDALE

"What's your name?" asked Farmer Doyle of a young man about seventeen years old who had applied to him to be taken on to the crop gathering force.
"Peter Simple," replied the youth.
"Know anything about farming?"
"No."
"What wages do you expect?"
"Whatever you choose to give."
"Well, consider that you look strong and are willing to leave the wages to me I reckon I'll take you on. I'll feed you and give you \$15 a month." So Peter Simple the next day went to work on the farm. It was the season when the war between the United States and Germany had been declared and the raising of cereal food was of great importance.
"Amanda," said Farmer Doyle to his daughter that evening when she was washing the dishes after supper, "I've took on a new man today, and I want to say to you that you're not to get mixed up with him."
"La, pa! Do you think I'm going to take up with a farm hand? I want some'n better'n that."
Nevertheless Amanda scrutinized each new hand her father employed with an eye, if he was young, to discover whether or not he would be worth appropriating. When she inspected Peter Simple he was in shirt and trousers, tossing hay on to a wagon with a pitchfork. He had a fine figure, and it showed to advantage in the costume he wore. It seemed to Amanda that he was worthy of consideration. She went into the dairy house, got a pitcher of buttermilk and took it out to him. He drank it with thanks and an admiring gaze at Amanda.
Peter was secretly Amanda's favorite till her father hired Josh Whitaker. Whitaker was a man of thirty red headed and freckled. He owned a farm, but that season he got an idea into his head that with so many farmers in the field prices were bound to go down. So he leased his farm and set out in his time in July and August went to work for Farmer Doyle. As soon as Amanda learned of Whitaker's farm and that he had \$2,500 invested in mortgages she dropped Peter and took up with Josh.
When a man, or rather, a boy, of seventeen falls in love he goes down clear over his head and keeps on going down till he touches bottom. Peter, who was in a worldly heaven while Amanda was smiling at him, was ready for suicide when he found himself supplanted. Amanda's parents saw it all and, though they had scolded her for encouraging Peter, they encouraged her to encourage Peter. Many a smile passed between the couple when at supper.
A week before the end of September an engagement was announced between Amanda Doyle and Josh Whitaker. It seemed to Peter that the bottom had dropped out of his life. He tried to find Amanda alone that he might beg her before it was too late to blight his life. He had made up his mind to tell her something that might induce her to change her mind.
Lucky Peter! Farmer Doyle came along and saw him waiting for Amanda at that hour she always went to milk the cows. Doyle called Peter into the house, paid him his wages to date and told him to vacate the premises. Peter surrendered and was never again seen on the Doyle farm.
Amanda in the autumn was married to Whitaker and on the wedding trip stopped over at a New England city. A football game between the teams of two colleges was advertised, and the bride persuaded the groom to take her to see it. There was the usual kicking about of the ball by small boys and the shouts of the cheer leaders and the yells of the crowd, and then the teams pranced onto the field like acrobats into a circus ring.
"Good gracious, Josh!" said Amanda. "Look a-ther!"
"Where? What?"
"That feller is Peter Simple as sure as my name's Mandy."
"So he is. By gum!"
There was Peter sure enough in the loggia of a football man. Both bride and groom scanned the score card to find Peter's name among the players. It was not there.
"Say, mister," said Josh to a youngster on the ground directly beneath him, "can you tell me who that young man is over there taking off his sweater?"
"That? That's Harkinson, the richest man in his college. They say he's worth millions."
There was no more comfort for either Mr. or Mrs. Whitaker on their bridal trip. Amanda looked sour enough to turn lemonade to vinegar and Whitaker could not look pleasant when his wife sulked. When they went home and the bride had told who Peter Simple was Farmer Doyle and his wife turned as sour as their daughter.
Jimmie Harkinson in May, becoming aware of the fact that he would be flunked at his graduation school examinations, availed himself of the national demand for food producers to go farming, for the board of education promised payment to all boys who would do so. Harkinson, not caring to be known as himself, chose the name of Peter Simple that he had picked out of a story book.
Had Farmer Doyle not discharged him he would have avowed his wealth to Amanda and gone to college in the fall with a millstone about his neck in the shape of a sweetheart he forgot in a fortnight.

SHIPS AND THEIR SIZE.

Why You Cannot Compare the Vessels According to Tonnage.

The different uses of tonnage terms when speaking of ships are causes of confusion to the lay mind, states Captain C. A. McAllister, engineer in chief, United States coast guard, in the Popular Science Monthly. For example, steamship companies in order to impress upon the traveling public the size and consequent relative safety of their craft will advertise the sailing of a certain steamer of 20,000 tons, meaning, of course, gross tons. The company's agent, in entering her at the custom house, will take great precaution to certify that she is of only 7,540 tons when paying tonnage taxes. He then is referring to her net tonnage. And, in fact, that standard is used only when paying dues or taxes.
Displacement tonnage is almost exclusively applied to warships, as they do not carry cargoes. Strange to say, the tonnage of a battleship varies at most hourly, as coal or other weighty objects are used or taken on board. The tonnage of warships is, however, fixed. They are referred to in terms of the fixed tonnage.
A statement that a 10,000 ton battleship sank a 10,000 ton merchant ship does not mean that the ships were of equal size. The merchant ship would be much the larger owing to the different meanings of the term "ton" as applied to the two types of vessels. It is absolutely impossible to give rules for the relations of these terms, as the conditions vary too greatly. Generally speaking, the gross tonnage of a ship is from 50 to 100 per cent greater than the net tonnage. Tons displacement are always in excess of tons gross. Deadweight tonnage is on an average from 30 to 50 per cent greater than gross tonnage.

THE BIBLE NEGLECTED.

Though Still the Best Seller, It is Not Read as It Used to Be.

Although the Bible still leads all other best sellers, few read it. People still present Bibles to brides and grooms. People still present Bibles to children. Colporteurs still roam the country handing out Bibles among the villagers. Associations of devout enthusiasts still put Bibles in hotels. But the Bible is seldom read aloud in the home. And the type of American who daily reads his Bible in secret from a sense of duty is becoming more and more rare.
Quite apart from its moral and religious bearings, the neglect of the Bible involves a cultural handicap, worth noting. It involves a cramping of the popular vocabulary, as no other literary masterpiece is such a well of English pure and undiluted. It involves a dulling of literary perceptions, as literature abounds in Biblical allusions which every reader of the Bible instantly understands, but which only readers of the Bible ever can. Finally it involves a failure to respond to many a good joke as an astonishing percentage of the best jokes are nothing more or less than Biblical allusions. It is mainly useless, we realize, to propose a course of self enforced Bible reading for adults. We insist, however, that parents who want their children to get the most enjoyment out of life may well see to it that their children develop an acquaintance with the Bible. It is the basis of keen speech. It is the basis of intelligent reading. It is the basis of culture. And by culture we mean a capacity for enjoying the fine and beautiful things of this world and the capacity for producing some.—Chicago Tribune.

Fright and the Hair.

The hair does stand on end under certain conditions, because there is a little muscle down at the root of each hair that will make each hair stand up straight when this muscle pulls a certain way. It is difficult to say just how these muscles are caused to act in this way when we are frightened. We know that when sometimes stand straight up, and we know that it is this muscle at the root of each hair that makes it possible, says the Book of Wonders, but why it is that a big scare will make this muscle act this way we do not as yet know.

Platinum Retorts.

Platinum is used directly in the making of munitions of war and indirectly in all sorts of operations that are incidental to warlike operations.
To cite but one example, in the manufacture of cordite perfectly pure sulphuric acid has to be used, and sulphuric acid can only be perfectly purified in platinum retorts, each of which, by the way, represents a value of \$50,000 to \$75,000.

A Lot to Know.

When Disraeli was prime minister of England a good looking young man applied to him for a government position. "I know, sir," said the applicant wistfully, "how little I know."
"Dear me," said Disraeli, "as much as that? I haven't got half that distance yet."

Biting.

Spinks—What made him so annoyed?
Winks—He told his wife she had no judgment, and she just looked over him critically from head to foot and said she was beginning to realize it.

Word From Br'er Williams.

Don't be in a hurry fer de long lane turn, fer de hon'-what's waitin' whar de turn is may be mighty hon'ry.—Atlanta Constitution.

Every shadow points to the sun, and sorrow helps us to appreciate happiness.

What Became of George Deering

By F. A. MITCHEL

A girl was working in a garden. Hearing a footstep on the walk, she looked up and saw a young man coming. Resting on her hoe, she looked at him intently.
"Morning," he said, doffing his hat when he reached her.
"Morning," responded the girl.
"Can you tell me where the Deering family have gone to? They lived half a mile down the road on this side."
"I remember that there was a family living thereabout when I was a little girl, but I don't know what has become of them."
"Putting in beets?" looking down at a drill.
"No; lettuce."
"Everybody's gardening this year."
"Yes. We've got to garden or starve. Prices of provisions are prohibitive."
There was a brief silence. The girl continued to loosen the soil with her hoe, then took up a rake and smoothed the ground from stones and tufts of grass. The young man showed no sign of moving on.
"So you can't tell me where the Deering family have moved to?" he said presently.
"No, I can't."
"Wasn't there a son, George?"
"George? George?" repeated the girl, as if trying to recall the person mentioned.
"I've been told he was the worst boy in the county. No apple tree was safe from him, and as for a watermelon patch, they say he would carry off a melon as big as a small barrel under each arm."
"If he was like that the county is well rid of him," the girl suggested.
"He was about eighteen when he left here, and I've been told that the night before he went he made love to one of the girls of the place, asking her to be his wife and telling her all sorts of yarns about how he was going to put her into a big house and dress her up fine, and all that. The next day he disappeared and never turned up again."
"There are lots of men like that in the world."
"Going to put in any potatoes?"
"Reckon not. Seed potatoes cost so much that I question if it would pay. It certainly wouldn't if the price of potatoes gets back to a reasonable figure."
"You say you don't remember George Deering?"
"If he was any such fellow as you have described I don't want to remember him."
She started another drill. The man took up a fork and opened the ground for her. When he had done so and removed some of the earth with the hoe he said:
"That'll be easier for you."
She thanked him and resumed her work.
"Do you see that beech tree over there?" he asked, pointing to a tree some fifty yards distant.
"Of course I do."
"I'm-going-over-to-look-at-it."
She made no comment, and he sauntered over to the tree, under which was a rustic bench. He glanced merrily at the trunk of the tree and looked at some letters that had been made by carving the bark. It had grown together so as to give them an appearance of having grown there naturally.
"Won't you please come here?" he called to the girl.
She dropped a trowel and advanced toward him. When she reached him, pointing to the letters on the tree trunk, he asked:
"Those initials are those?"
"The upper ones?"
"Yes."
"Those are mine."
"And those beneath?"
"I can't see them."
This was true; her eyes were dimmed with moisture.
"These letters," continued the young man, "stand for Eva Butterfield and George Deering. I know George very well. He's a faulty chap and no mistake, but there are palliating circumstances in his case. Sit down here and I'll tell you something about him."
He led her to the bench, where they sat down side by side. Then he continued:
"George struck bad luck from the start. He didn't write to Eva because he had nothing cheerful to write. At least he didn't send her a letter. He wrote one or two, but on reading them over they appeared to him so hopeless that he tore them up. Several years later the prospect before him mended, and he said, 'If I make some money I'll write to Eva.' He did make a little money, which gave him something to work with to make more, but when he sat down to write to Eva it occurred to him that he had treated her unpardonably. The only hope for him was to go to her and tell her so, and maybe she would forgive him."
"About that time a chance was offered him to get in on the ground floor of a big operation, and he concluded to wait awhile. If the scheme turned out well he might make good the stupid boast he had made the night he parted from her. It turned out bigger than his wildest dreams."
The girl had been looking at the toes of her shoes. When he ceased speaking she turned her face to his. Not a word was spoken, but a great deal was done. After being locked for some time in each other's arms George asked:
"Did you know me?"
"From the first moment I first saw you."